

2010 Legislative Report

Richard DeBolt & Gary Alexander



20th District
State
Representatives



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 2010 session is over. As you probably know, the Democrat majority was unable to finish its business in the allotted 60-day session and needed a 30-day special session called by Gov. Gregoire – all in an effort to raise your taxes!

After suspending the voter-approved Taxpayer Protection Act (I-960) during the 60 day regular session, and using all 30 days of the special session to debate and deliberate, **Democrats passed the largest tax increase in state history!**

We believe that if they would have expended as much energy on reforming state services and finding true efficiencies as they did on looking for new and increased taxes, we would **not have needed a special session and the budget would not have been balanced on the backs of taxpayers.**

Our priorities this session were simple:

- Get people back to work;
- Balance the budget without raising your taxes.

We feel this session was one of missed opportunities as one-party rule in Olympia continues to push our state in the wrong direction. We hope you'll join us in working to make Washington the best state in which to live, work and raise a family.

Sincerely,

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BUDGET and TAXES

Families and employers were hit especially hard as the Democrat majority passed the largest tax increase in state history.



State spending has decreased by less than one percent from last year's budget and uses \$1.4 billion in one-time money to fund ongoing programs. This small cut in state spending represents a serious disconnect from reality.

We offered the majority party over \$750 million in government reforms and efficiencies, but were ignored. And, because their budget solution to our state's \$2.8 billion shortfall relies so much on one-time money, the practice of adopting unsustainable and unrealistic budgets continues. As a result, **we will most likely see another multi-billion dollar shortfall next session.** This is not responsible governing; this is not accountable leadership.

Following is a small sampling of these new and increased taxes which will further hamper our state's economic recovery and lead to more job losses:

- A 0.30% increase in the B&O tax on services = \$242 million;
- Cigarette (\$1 per pack) and other tobacco products = \$101 million;
- 50-cent per gallon (28-cents per six pack) beer tax = \$59 million;
- Sales tax on bottled water = \$32.6 million;
- Sales tax on candy/gum = \$30.5 million;
- 2-cent per 12-ounce soda tax = \$33.5 million;
- B&O increase on certain canned meat products = \$4.1 million;
- B&O tax increase on mortgages = \$3.6 million;
- B&O tax increase on corporate officer salaries = \$2.1 million;
- Tax increase on livestock nutrient management = \$1.3 million;
- Tax increase on PUD electric bills = \$1.2 million;
- Personal liability for tax debts = \$1.1 million.

We continue to believe that tax increases are not the answer to our state's budget problems. **Higher taxes hurt families and employers.** State government has grown too big, too fast and state spending must come back into alignment with state revenues.

House Republican Leader Richard DeBolt and Assistant Floor Leader Rep. Charles Ross discuss floor strategy, as members of the House of Representatives prepare to vote on the highest tax increase in state history. DeBolt argued vehemently against the tax increase measures, noting that they will only hurt families and employers.



JOBS and ECONOMY

State unemployment is at an alarming 9.5 percent and upwards of 14 percent in parts of the 20th District. When compared to the private sector, where over 189,000 jobs have been lost since the beginning of the recession in February of 2008, state government still has more employees today than when Gov. Gregoire took office. While national economic trends certainly play a role, it's up to our state leadership to improve its business climate and get people back to work. We must protect and create jobs by revitalizing our economy and attracting new investment into the state. That is why we supported the House Republican Made in Washington jobs package, aimed at retaining family-wage jobs in our area and attracting new jobs to our state. Our Made in Washington plan would have returned people back to work sooner by improving the efficiency of our unemployment insurance and workers' compensation systems; reforming government services and easing costly regulations, and protecting workers health care with common-sense reforms that reduce costs and protect consumer choice.

Only one measure in the jobs package was signed into law. House Bill 2603 will give businesses 48 hours to correct mistakes before a state agency can issue a fine or penalty. Nothing is more critical to our state's economic recovery than job creation and retention. Washington's leaders must declare our state "open for business" and encourage employers to hire workers.



As the budget leader for House Republicans, Rep. Alexander spoke adamantly against repealing the Taxpayers' Protection Act (I-960). He also proposed sustainable, long-term budget solutions that did not raise taxes. Here, he confers with assistant ranking member on the House Ways and Means Committee, Rep. Bruce Dammeier from Puyallup.

PUBLIC SAFETY

People should be safe where they live and work. We all want this for our families. After the tragic murders of four Lakewood police officers and a Seattle police officer last fall, legislation was introduced to correct a system that failed two communities and our fallen heroes. We strongly supported the Lakewood Police Officers Memorial Act (House Joint Resolution 4220), which would allow more discretion for judges to deny bail to suspects facing a life sentence and who are deemed dangerous to the community. There was strong bipartisan support for this measure and we are pleased to see it pass through the Legislature. Because it is a constitutional amendment, it now must be approved by a simple majority of voters statewide.

